Chapter 6

Social Work Practices With Street Children -Vis-à-Vis Child Abuse

The practice of social work has gone through major changes because of various factor like demographic and political changes, social and policy level transformations, and the then, again, the recent economic crisis in the world. Hence, in order to be “up to speed “as a professional, various social work theories and approaches have been evolved to deal with seasonal cycles of social as well as individual problems. This chapter will deal with the evolution of social work, its definitions, broad objectives and various approaches of social work practices. In the context of the present study, the researcher used various social work theories to understand the different contributory factors of child abuse and its effect on the children living on the streets with their families. This chapter will give brief descriptions of the theoretical aspects of the study and as well as use of social work practice in the context of the present study.

Evolution of Social Work approaches and its practices:

The concept of social work practice originated out of the early efforts of churches and philanthropic groups to relieve the effects of poverty through bringing the comforts of religion to the poor, orphans, sick and the aged. Orphanages and homes for the elderly were typical results of these activities. The word “charity” best describes the early activities, which were aimed at the piecemeal alleviation of particular maladjustments. In such charitable work the principal criterion in determining aid to families was worthiness, while the emphasis in later social work was on restoring individuals to normal life both for their own sake and for the sake of the community.

The first attempts to solve the problem of poverty in a modern scientific way was made by P. G. F. Le Play, who in the 1850s made a detailed study of the budgets of hundreds of French workers’ families. Forty years later Charles
Booth investigated wages and prices, working conditions, housing and health, standards of living, and leisure activities among the poor of London and revealed the extreme poverty of a third of the population. Booth’s social survey became a method for determining the extent of social maladjustment, and through surveys in other cities in Europe and the United States a vast number of facts were accumulated, and methods were developed that provided the basis for modern social research and orientation towards the social work profession.

Beginning with World War II, social work was generally recognized as a profession by the United States Army, State Federal Civil Service and Merit Systems, and by the other professions. Social work as a profession emerged from different social movements. At the beginning of twentieth century, Alice Salmon, Jane Adams, Ilse Art, Helena Radlinsha and other few social scientist first conceptualized social work as a profession. Since then, it has gone through several phases and has changed the regime of social welfare with the advent of new theories of social work. Thus, it slowly detached from the charitable activities of church and other religious organization.

It is difficult to give a clear definition of Social Work as it is still emerging as a profession. There are countries which still equate social work with social services. In the Social Work Year Book (1945) Prof. Anderson defines social work as a professional service to people for the purpose of assisting them, as individuals or in groups, to obtain satisfying relationships and standards of life in accordance with their particular wishes and capacities and in harmony with those of the community”. Prof. Strop says: “Social Work is an art of bringing various resources to bear on individual, group and community needs by the application of a scientific method of helping people to help themselves.”

In summary the main features of social work as pointed out by the International Survey are:

(1) It is a helping activity

(2) It is a social activity established for the benefit of community and not for profit motives
(3) It is a liaison activity through which the disadvantaged individuals or groups may tap community resources.

So far as India is concerned Social Work has not yet acquired a professional status and is considered an activity to help economically dependent persons. B. G. Kher remarked: “The aim of Social Work, as generally understood, is to remove social injustice, to relieve distress, to prevent suffering and to assist the weaker members of society to rehabilitate themselves and their families and in short, fight the five giant evils of (1) physical want (2) disease (3) ignorance (4) squalor (5) idleness.” Prof. Sushil Chandra says:” Social Work is a dynamic activity undertaken by public or private efforts in the implementation of social policy, with a view to raise the standard of living and to bring about social, economic, political and cultural well-being of the individual, family and the group within a society irrespective of stages of social development” (G.R Madan, 1994)

Objectives and philosophy of social work:

In the words of Prof. Clark the main objectives of social work are:

“(1) to help people to make such use of their own capacities and of environmental will result in personal satisfactions and social adjustment, and (2) to help in the modification of the environment so that people will have fewer personal and social problems.”

Generally social work is concerned with social relationships, with individuals and groups as interrelated with social milieu, more particularly with the external and internal stresses which may arise in that interrelationship, and which result in social dis functioning. All are concerned with removal of blocks to growth, release of potentialities, full use of inner resources, development of capacities to manage one’s own (the individual, group or community) life, ability to function as an integrated unit.

Prof. Friendlander further describes that that aim of social work is not only to help individual, the family and the group of persons in their social relationships, but it is also concerns with the improvement of general social
conditions by raising health and economic standards, advocating better housing and working conditions, and constructive social regulations.

Mr. Brown describes the definition of social work in a much broader sense and not strictly in its professional context. He describes that social work is concerned with psychological problems of client, arise out of cause or effect of poverty, illness, and crime, or appear independently. It seeks to enrich the standard of living of economically less favoured individuals through providing the essential amenities of life including better housing, enlarged and improved health, education and leisure time facilities. He further describes that the concerns for welfare of the individuals or the groups leads to various levels of participation, leadership which ultimately leads to attain social reforms. These reforms may facilitate in achieving enlightened treatment of criminal, improvements in wages or working conditions, protective labour legislations for women, children, and extension of economic and political rights of minority groups. It also helps in designing a federally supported and supervised system of public assistant (G.R Madan, 1994).

The ethical and the philosophical assumptions as summed up during The United Nations Third International Survey on Social Work are as follows:

a. To recognize the worth of the individual human being, regardless of the circumstances, status, race, religion, politics, or behaviour; and to foster the growth of human dignity and self respect.

b. To respect individual, group and community differences, at the same time as seeking to harmonize them with the common welfare.

c. To encourage self help as a means to growth in self confidence and in ability to assume responsibility.

d. To promote opportunities for satisfying living in particular circumstances of individuals, groups or communities.

e. To accept a professional responsibility to work for the implementation of social policies consistent with social work knowledge and philosophy about human desires and needs, with the aim of affording to every individual, the opportunity to make the best use of his environment and his own potentialities.
f. To safeguard the confidential nature of professional relationship.
g. To use this relationship to help client (individuals, groups or communities) to become more free and self-reliant rather than to try manipulate them to fit a preconceived pattern.
h. To make responsible use of the professional relationship for the purpose of promoting as objectively as possible the greatest good for the individual and the best interest of the society. (G.R Madan, 1994)

Changing Concept of Social Work:

It has been a very important to recognize that social work has to have a multi-functional relationship with the global political situations, social policies, globalization, economic recessions and the demographic changes. As a Hungarian practitioner before WW II, Rezso Hilscher, the leading professional figure of the ‘Hungarian Settlement Movement’ wrote in his well-known paraphrase: “Social work personalizes the impersonal social policy” through the work of social workers. This conceptual and practical cooperation between the two professions (social work and social policy) made it possible that the golden age of social work was in the heights of the welfare state period of social policy (1950 - 1980) internationally. Due to the special political structural changes in many countries (like CEE countries), social work is slowly reinventing its scope of work with the social and political transition. These changes mainly mean withdrawal of the state from either social service provisions, or/and financing social service provisions. There has been a the major change in the trend of social work because of an additional factors like political changes in the international scenario and the then, again, the recent economic crisis and demographic changes in the world gave a further impetus to the problem. Therefore, social work is understood as referring to a complex heterogeneous field. Yet the ramifications of these aspects of social work for theory building have been interpreted in number of ways and thus this field is constantly developing. Hence, in order to be “up to speed “, as a professional, one has to keep up with “fashion” and the seasonal cycle of concepts determining current discourse. Broadly, the theories of social work can be categorized under three broad classical approaches.
One school of thought focuses on individuals and believes that the main causes of the individual’s problems are within the individuals. Therefore social work programmes are oriented towards individuals in order to solve their problem. Another school of thought believes in a radical approach. It believes that the structure and culture of the society have influence upon the individual and vice versa. Thus, programmes should be oriented towards changing the structures and empowering the people to solve their problem. The third approach is focused on integration of both the approaches (University of Ljubljana, 2009)

**Theoretical and practical approaches focusing on individuals:**

These approaches focus on individuals, interactions between individuals and relationship between individuals and society. These approaches are based on psycho dynamic, analytic, behavioural and cognitive theories. Social work programmes are focused on an individual, his or her personality, unmet needs and the environment upon which individuals depend for the satisfaction of needs. The psychological theories are used to manage contingencies which affect the relationship between the individuals and the social consequences.

The problem of this approach is that these theories and practice define specific psychological problems to be worked upon but overlooks the social, economic and structural aspects that have attributed problems within individuals. The main areas of practice for social work are the individual, his/her families, small groups or sub groups within the organisation (University of Ljubljana, 2009)

**Radical approach -theories and methods focused on power relationship:**

The radical social work approach is a distinct and consciously articulated approach within social work theory. These theories came to prominence from the 1960s. It criticises the other approaches which are individual centric. The believers of radical approach criticise the selective psychological explanations of social problems, as it makes the problem a private matter instead transforming them into public issue.

Several factors have contributed to the emergence of more radical forms of social work practice. The re-emergence of economic crisis just after Second World War led to the emergence of growing global movement. Along with that,
the introduction of neo-liberal onslaught, structural adjustment programmes imposed by International Monetary Fund, privatisation of public sectors, introduction of new legislations and findings of several research studies attributed to the emergence of radical approach in social work.

This approach re-orientates the social work towards the true origin of the problem. At an ideological level, the growing popularity of sociology as an academic discipline exposed the social workers to new radical ideas about the family, mental illness, impact of structural factors on individual behaviours. Thus, the socialist critique was most clearly attributed in radical social work theories. Since its beginning, social workers have mirrored wider ideological conflicts and debates regarding the roots of social problems and how to address them best. The radical theories and methods focussed on power relationships and social change by and for individuals, groups and community and within social agencies are applied to these approaches. The structural theories expanded this approach beyond mere economic factors to include all overlapping and mutually reinforcing dimensions of injustice, discriminations of injustice, discriminations and oppression. The theory claims that capitalist macro societal structures shapes the cultural codes, social position, life, action space and relationship of individuals both within and between families, groups, organisations and society. To an enormous degree, they also determine the life chances of members of social categories (have and have-nots), gender, race, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, religious belief etc. (Mike (eds),1975)

The critical consciousness rising, democratic community work or community organisations were the oldest theoretical conceived strategy practiced in radical social work. It involves the process of organising community to identify needs, built platforms to meet goals through mobilising the required material, symbolic and personal resources. By undertaking this process, social work transforms the private troubles into public issues in a democratic process. Empowerment, organisational advocacy are also the core concepts of radical social work that enables individuals, groups or communities to use sources of power to achieve satisfaction of human needs that they are entitled to.
Through this approach, social work focus on changing the structures of social agencies by means of introducing issues pertaining to the concepts of human rights, social justice and anti-discrimination in the international code of professional ethics, policies, methods, diagnostic or assessment criteria and documentation of Social Welfare Organisation (Adams, R, Dominelli, L and Payne, M (eds), Palgrave, 2002).

**Integrated Approach to Social Work:**

Jane Addams is one of the pioneers of another classical theory that integrates both the approaches mentioned above. He developed a normative version of integral approach that promote freedom, participation as well as social justice and care in all social system including social, economic educational, political sphere and within social welfare systems. Thus, social work intervention must therefore be directed towards fighting together with citizen, political parties, and other organisations for enactment of new laws, regulations to ensure social security especially for the protection of children, women in abusive, exploitative conditions. Another aspect of the approach involves changing social rules or ideologies that allows exploitations at work place, family and within legislations.

The combined approach to individual and social change governs the approach of new era. Therefore, the intermediate positions but the consensual international definition of Social Work is as follows (Adams, R, Dominelli, L and Payne, M (eds), Palgrave, 2002):

The Social Work Profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships, and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the point where people interact with the environment. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work.
Conventional Social Work Approaches in relation to Child Protection

The concept of a state sanctioned child welfare system dates back to Plato’s Republic (380 BC). Plato theorised that the interests of the child could be served by snatching children from the care of their parents and placing them under state custody. The current provincial or state government’s child protection legislations also empower the government department or agency to provide services and to intervene in families where child abuse or other problems are suspected. The agency that manages these services has various names in different provinces and states, e.g., department of children’s services, children’s aid and department of child and family services. There is some consistency in the nature of laws, though the application of the laws varies across the country.

Broadly, the present child welfare services designed to provide an array of prevention and intervention services to children and families, particularly children who have been or are at risk of abuse or neglect; children with special medical or mental health needs; delinquent children; and children who do not have adult caregivers. This “system” has been dubbed by an amalgamation of programs with efforts to prevent out-of-home placements, reunify families, and provide long term care and solutions to families in need. Regardless of how it is characterized, the child welfare system is designed to support families and to protect children from harm.

All the child protection related legislations enacted before 1989, were predominantly designed to provide services both to the neglected and delinquent children through institutional and community based services. From the inception of child protection services the role of social workers were mainly to use the empirically derived interventions to help child victims and their families to achieve their optimum level of psychosocial functioning, including: psychological, emotional, behavioral, educational, developmental, and relational functioning. Predominantly, different theoretical and practical approaches focusing on individuals were used to help the child victims and
his/her family to restore their normal functioning. Workers in this field assess children’s needs and offer assistance to improve their situation. In assessing needs different social theories like psycho dynamic, analytic, behavioural and cognitive theories are used to analyse specific psychological problem to be worked on and accordingly, rehabilitation programmes are designed. Allied agencies and services are coordinated to assist the child or family. These services includes, assistance to single parents in finding day care, arrange adoptions, or help find foster homes for neglected, abandoned, or abused children. The Social workers also provide specialized services in dealing with specially abled children, addiction, adoption, homelessness, domestic violence, or foster care. In dealing with these problems social workers mainly practice case work and group work methods for dealing with children, his/her families and with children’s groups.

Thus, in conventional child protection services, child centric services are provided to help the alienated children to come out with their own problems and to readjust in the mainstreamed society. As mentioned before, in these individual oriented approaches social work theories are used to manage contingencies which affect the relationship between the children and the social consequences. However it overlooks the social, economic and structural aspects that have attributed problems within the children and his or her family.

**Emerging Social Work Approaches in Child Protection:**

In 1948, the United Nations had addressed child abuse as a human rights issue, adding a section specifically on children in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted in 1989 further provided a universal set of child protection standards to be adhered to by all countries to protect children and child offenders from being abused. For the first time in the history, children were recognised not as a passive recipient of benefits but as the subject or holder of their own rights. Children were acknowledged as individuals and as members of a family and a community, with rights and responsibilities appropriate to his or her age and stage of development. Focus was given on participation of children towards identification and solution of their own problems. It has also empowered children to raise their voice in case of violation of their basic rights. It also
encourages children to express their opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters or procedure affecting them. This treaty has a profound impact on the child related laws and child protection services throughout the world. Moreover, child participation is a very new concept introduced in child protection and its approaches are still emerging. Thus, the role of social workers in the area of child participation and protection is evolving as a field of practice. Different Governmental and Non-Governmental agencies are coming up with their own child protection policies and designing behavioural protocols for their organisations to adhere to the child protection standards. However, involvement and recognition of children in decision making is still tentative and subjective.

Against this backdrop, the researcher feels that a combination of radical approach and individual centric approaches are required to ensure child protection standards. Still, child abuse is dealt as a private matter instead considering this as a social or public issue. Macro societal structures, cultural codes, social position, influences of social policies, have direct relationship of children both within and between families, groups, organisations and society. It also determines the social position of children, life chances belief etc. Thus, the structural analysis of child abuse, analysis of social controls and functions of children within different settings have predominant role in child protection services.

Most importantly, in understanding child abuse and child participation, adults’ sharing and control of power, decision making and information sharing with children are important areas of understanding. Thus in the present context of child protection, the social worker has an important role in redrawing the world of adult through empowerment and organisational advocacy, so that the children are given an opportunity to be heard. Thus the radical social work approaches are required to enable children to use sources of power according to their stages of development to achieve satisfaction of human needs that they are entitled to. It entails adults’ listening and making space for children. Thus, the role of social workers will be to creating space for children so that children are encouraged to develop and refine their competencies and put democratic values into practice.
In the context of India the implementation of child protection programmes suffer from poor implementation, lack of professional approach, less political commitment and limited resources. Moreover, the problem of child abuse among the children of families living on the streets is a social problem. The social, economic and structural aspects of these families are the main attributors of the problem of child abuse. Thus, the concerns of child protection programmes can not only be dealt with the children, his/her families, small groups or sub groups within which these families operate. Therefore a structural change through policy level modifications is required to ensure basic securities and amenities for families living on the streets to ensure a safe environment for their children. On the other hand child centric support will be required to restore the normal functioning of alienated children. Thus, integrated approaches of social work are required to reduce vulnerabilities of children, provide justice, and ensure participation to reintegrate child victims into the mainstreamed society.

At an ideological level, the researcher also believes that structural factors have close correlation with child abuse, neglect and deviant behaviours of children. Thus, the social worker can play an important role in assessing the social transactions of children using the theory of systems approach to human behaviour. Systems approach to human behaviour makes two general substantive assumptions: “(1) The state or condition of a system, at any one point in time is a function of the interaction between it and the environment in which it operates. (2) Change and conflict are always evident in a system. Individuals both influence their environments and are influenced by them. Processes of mutual influence generate change and development.” (Longres, 1990. p. 19). Based on this theory, the researcher can analyse family structures and the environment within which street families operate. Socio economic profiles of street families, transactions of street children within their families, peer groups and within larger community, education systems and legal systems can also be assessed to understand their influence on behaviours of children. To understand various dimensions of child abuse and neglect, overlapping and mutually reinforcing dimensions of injustice, power relationships, discriminative factors can also be analysed. The social worker can use his/her
professional skills in assessing the environmental factors of child abuse and its effects on children. In doing this, the researcher has used her critical thinking skills within the context of professional standards and use her knowledge, analytical abilities and values to assess individual, interpersonal, and inter-organizational needs within primary institutions, groups, organizations, and communities of street living families (McClendon, Patricia D, 1991).

Against this background, the role of social worker can be categorized under two broad heads: (a) Role of social worker at the micro level (b) Role of social worker at the macro. The suggested roles of social workers for the protection of children living with their families on the streets have been narrated below:

(a) Role of social worker at the Micro level.

- **Community based services to assist children to deal with their “life stressors” and maladjustment**: Because of the exposures of metro cities, children living on the streets develop high level of aspirations that lead to frustrations and internal conflicts because of their limited capacities and access to resources. These problems arise among children because of their maladjustment between their own environment and their needs, capacities, rights and aspirations. Social workers can use this knowledge of social psychology to capture the understanding children about their own needs, rights and perceptions about their own environment. As a method of practice social workers can use different qualitative tools to ensure active participation of the street living families and their children in the assessment of their “life stressors” that includes their perception about their own family settings, environment, education system, work environment and legal and administrative system. Thus, social workers can play an important role in designing community based services to assist children to deal with their “life stressors” and frustrations.

- **Facilitating children to identify perpetrators within their community**: Social workers can facilitate children to capture children’s perception about different types of abuse they experience within different settings and how they perceive different perpetrators. Social workers can also
facilitate children to coordinate with different allied system like NGOs and police stations. Thus, social workers can use their skills of participatory tools to identify and manage the problems of children within community settings through an active coordination with supportive and legal systems.

- **Facilitating families to move from un-authorised to authorised areas:** The survival mechanisms of families and the children can be assessed using the broad conceptual framework of Social Darwinism. Through this study, the researcher tried to analyse different underlying and largely irresistible forces acting within the communities of street families that drives them through an evolutionary process. These social evolution processes creates natural conflicts within their own groups. Consequently, the “best adapted” families or individuals survive these conflicts and design their own psychosocial coping mechanism to make them fit within their environment. Globalisation has helped raise the standard of living for many people world-wide. Conversely, it has driven many deeper into poverty. The democratisation of technology options is a primary characteristic of globalisation which has created tension among the people who have limited skills and resources. Moreover, it has created unemployment and shrinkage of economic opportunities for the poor, living in the deprived and rural areas of India. These factors have further pushed these poor families from the socially and culturally homogenous community to a complicated and heterogeneous community with less social support. The families settled on streets suffer from illegitimate status, constant threat of eviction and lack all the basic social and legal support system. The “best adapted” families who could win the struggle move from unauthorised to authorised settlements and access basic amenities of life. The families who stays back on the streets suffer from internal as well as external conflicts resulted in psycho-social problems within the family and attribute to neglect and exploitations towards their own children. On the other hand children also adopt different coping mechanisms and survival tricks to adapt themselves within the complicated systems. Children became prone to adapt deviant survival tricks to make them fit within the environment. Social worker m
can play an active role in assessing positive factors of the evolutionary process and help other families to move from unauthorised areas to unauthorised slums through reinforcing the positive factors active within their community.

- **Identification and Reinforcement of self-protection mechanism of street community:** Building on the idea of self-organising and self-sustaining autopoietic system found preliminary in biology and cybernetics, the social worker can strive to capture the self-organising and self-sustaining structures evolves within the street living families and among their children. Families tries to settle in clusters, develop their own social support systems and affiliate themselves with the powerful political party members to sustain themselves within the unauthorised areas of the cities. On the other hand children affiliate themselves with the powerful gangs which are also supported by political party members. The role of social worker should be to amplify the positive determinants of self-organising structures to switch them in a desired direction.

- **Management of abused and traumatised children:** The Social worker can use the empirically derived interventions to help child victims and their families to achieve their optimum level of psychosocial functioning, including: psychological, emotional, behavioral, educational, developmental, and relational functioning. Social worker can use different theoretical and practical approaches based on psycho dynamic, analytic, behavioural and cognitive theories to restore the normal functioning of alienated children and his/her family.

- **Facilitate children to access legal support:** The Social worker can also play an important role to facilitate children to access legal aid and other legal support systems. Social workers can use their professional skills to ensure children’s active involvement during lodging complaints in police stations, investigations, trials, and adjudication to protect their best interest.
(b) Role of social worker at the Macro Level:

- While assessing the factors of child abuse, the researcher felt that social worker needs to emphasise on a changed environment focused on transaction of social environment. Thus, the social worker can use their professional ability to analyse the impact of international and national level social policies, social welfare legislations as well as implementation of the policies for the children of families living on the streets. In doing this, the social worker can assess policies and schemes of Government of India, Juvenile Justice Systems and can assess the interaction of children and their family with law and order machineries. Thus, the social worker can play an active role in designing need based policies to promote structural change at macro level. Social workers can also can play an important role in ensuring active partnership of street living families based on “mutuality and reciprocity” in designing need based policies to address their felt needs.

- It is well recognised that families living on the streets have multiple needs. Thus, a combination of health, education, livelihood and protection schemes can be used uplifting the quality of life for families living on the streets. In this sphere, a social worker can play an active role within the democratic as well as bureaucratic systems to facilitate integrated policy designing process for the families living on the streets through using specialised knowledge and skills of social work.

- The role of social worker can also be envisaged for the customisation of education and legal systems to fulfil the capacity building and protection needs of the children of the street living families. Thus the role of social workers can also be to work with the education system to design needs driven education curriculum and system for the children with different needs.

- Overall, the researcher tried to respect the voice of children through their active participation in their own situational analysis, abuse identification and in designing child friendly police systems and process.
Hence the role of social workers can be envisaged with the juvenile justice systems to customise the protection systems for the children.

- Designing and institutionalising child protection policies within different governmental and non-governmental system can be another important role of the social worker. The social worker must play an active role in designing recruitment procedure for the staff who will be directly dealing with children, defining behavioural protocols for the staff and designing the monitoring plan for the proper adherence of child protection policies.

- Punishment of offenders involved in child abuse is also an area of concern. The present Juvenile Justice Act does not ensure the punishment of adult offenders. Thus, social worker can play an important role in designing effective coordination between Juvenile Justice System and Criminal courts to ensure proper punishment of offenders. Social workers can also facilitate the Administration to design effective data base to record details paedophilic cases through an effective coordination between police and Juvenile System so that these people can be retrained to directly work with children.

Conclusion:

The role of social workers has broadened over the last few decades throughout the world. Still in India, social work has not yet acquired a professional status. However, with the changing socio-economic situations, globalization and with the enhancement of activities of International charities in India, scope and fields of social work is also expanding. Simultaneously, the roles of social workers are also broadening with the increasing demand for such services in the country. A number of social work institutes have come up in India over the last few decades to meet the demand of professional social workers. However the number of trained professionals is less than the demand. Therefore, people from different fields and expertise are also joining the sector and performing the expected role of the professional social worker. Understanding and practice of social work has been gone through a process of infusion. The researcher feels that all the professionals expected to perform the role of social workers should
be educated with the philosophy and broad conceptual framework of social work to enrich the developmental sectors of the country. As the role of social work in the area of child participation is still an emerging issue, more social work theories and practices need to be devised to build the skills of social workers to ensure children’s participation in the area of child protection.